

As Supervisor of Copake I am also a member of the Columbia County Board of Supervisors. Over the past week, I have received over 25 letters, written to the Columbia County Industrial Development Agency (also known as the Columbia County IDA) and copied to the Board of Supervisors. Each of these letters has urged that the IDA refuse the grant an IDA PILOT (or Payment in Lieu of Taxes) to Hecate Energy for the Shepherd's Run solar project.

The Town of Copake and the Taconic Hills School District have both refused to give Shepherd's Run a tax exemption. But the IDA can override the School and Town and give Hecate tax and financial incentives.

I received a call from Mike Tucker, who is President and CEO of Columbia Economic Development Corporation and serves on the IDA. Mr. Tucker has explained that although the IDA is meeting on December 14, the Hecate project is not on the Agenda. Mr. Tucker has said that the issue of solar projects will be discussed generally on Monday. The meeting is open to the public and on their website.

If the IDA wants to have a policy on which projects to support we think it is simple. If a Town has opposed a project, if the project would violate the Town's law and is inconsistent with the Town's Comprehensive Plan it should not receive any tax breaks.

We will see how all this unfolds, but I am very grateful for the lively debate on this subject, and for the civic engagement of all involved- both those who oppose the project- and those who support it. Frankly, in our little Town we are seeing the best of democracy- where citizens are engaged and informed but respectful of each other and each other's views.

And now, as this extraordinary year draws to its long awaited end, I want to thank all those who have remained active in Town government in spite of all the hurdles. I want to thank the Park Commission- who is organizing a Holiday Lights competition, the ZBA and the Planning Boards, who have been zooming month after month, I want to thank all those who work in Town Hall- who are essential to the smooth operation of Copake; Bill Gregory and the Highway Department for their tireless hard work and good spirit, the courageous members of the brand new Economic Development Advisory Committee- who are coming up with new and exciting ideas for bolstering Copake's economy, Dan Haas, our local champion, and the CAC; the Hamlet Task Force for everything, and especially for decorating and tagging all those holiday trees and the Road Advisory Committee who are now reconvening to give Copake a brand new look.

And two more “thank yous”. One to Andy Kettler. Andy just moved here and is renovating the house across from Folger’s Pond. A brand new Copakian, he is kindly supplying the electricity to light the lovely Christmas tree across from his house. Nice. Thanks Andy.

And finally, I want to thank the spouses and partners of the Board members, of the Committee members. Those people who did not sign up for this, but are left waiting for those long zoom meetings to end. We see you sometimes as you keep the TV low, and keep the dogs from barking. To all of you, those in the background. Thank you.

And to all in Copake-whether you celebrate Hanukah, the Solstice, Christmas or just the end of this tumultuous year, we wish you the best.